

To Whom It May Concern:

**RE: HB 5287. AAC Licensure Of Facilities That Provide Temporary Care To Children With Minor Illnesses**

As a practicing pediatrician for the past 20 years, I have had the privilege of witnessing and addressing parents' trials and tribulations in dealing with the daily activities relating to raising a child.

I have devoted my professional career, as a result of this, toward providing continuity, assuring accessibility to care, as well as providing a comforting non-intimidating environment in which to care for children. In short, I have worked to earn peoples' trust by providing a "medical home" for them long before it became a fashionable "buzz word" on the national agenda.

I believe the very success of the National Healthcare Reform Act resides in our ability to think creatively and "out of the box", and, in the process, focus more on the ability to improve efficiency in health care delivery rather than strictly reducing costs. Delivering healthcare efficiently must rely on continuity of care. The medical home model, in particular as we practice it in Berlin, CT, assures this.

We do not send children to expensive emergency rooms, nor specialists needlessly as so often is the case today because we work with our families to promote continuity. When a parent calls us, we are thoroughly familiar with their child. We empower the parent with the ability to call anytime with their concerns, and this ensures the parents' willingness to contribute to their child's care, making us better providers in the process. We try to be "in tune" with our parents' concerns, frankly putting ourselves in their shoes. The presence of these parents from our practice today is testament to what I believe we are doing right.

The success of any reform also hinges on improving the quality of life of our families. Why else would anyone be so concerned about the proper delivery of care if we do not achieve that objective?

American families today are being torn in compromising directions in the care of their children. Fewer and fewer families have the "luxury" of having a "stay at home" caretaker. More and more families must place their children in daycare settings, often juggling and, in the process, jeopardizing professional and work commitments. All too often these families suffer emotional, spiritual, as well as physical detriments as a result.

All too often, children become ill at these centers. As a result, with no recourse (due to Connecticut state law), these children must be picked up immediately by their working parents. The parents are taxed by their allegiance to their employer, and the employer in turn is compromised of productivity. For small businesses such as mine, the effect can be devastating at



times. Seen on a grander state and national scale, one can easily see how such a situation *daily* disrupts the familial, social, and employer productivity landscape.

So isn't it ironic that the current situation in almost all states, Connecticut included, is contributing to the daily turmoil? By not allowing the licensure of urgent care facilities to help working families "heal", the state is contributing to the loss of productivity as well as the inadvertent fracturing of familial emotional well being.

Is it not time to allow working parents, as well as their employers, an option to place their mildly sick child in such a center? Do we not have an obligation as a state to reduce the previously mentioned familial and economic turmoil which is contributing to the disrupting of the familial fabric of our society?

A sick care center for children will:

- provide a safe, medically competent holding area for children to convalesce in until their parents fulfill their employer obligations.
- will practice the same infection control measures practiced in major medical centers to minimize infectious spread of disease.
- will be staffed by a board certified pediatrician, assuming liability for the care of the children in the center.
- will have ancillary healthcare providers staffed at least 1:5 (provider:children).
- will have a changing daily census with drop off / pick up times primarily in the AM and PM. Hours of operation will mimic the work schedule hours of parents.
- will provide full day or 1/2 day care for children of varying ages (2 months to 12 years for instance).
- will provide courier / pick up service if so desired by parents.
- will have the ability to provide an examination by the staff pediatrician if so desired by the parent.
- will attempt to establish relationships with employers regarding compensation to alleviate any financial burden on the parent.
- will provide, in short, a natural extension of the medical home model that has not yet even been contemplated on the national level!

In championing this effort, you not only relieve the stressors that affect working families, but you also aid in the health and productivity of the local state economy.



You provide a "win-win" situation that will allow Connecticut to lead the nation in taking the interests of working families first. I am sure many of you yourselves have personally felt the hardship that the current situation permits. Do you not think it is your responsibility to help your fellow citizens (some probably less fortunate than you) in a way which can brighten their familial life as well as the interests of their employers?

I thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today. I must apologize for not being here today due to a previous out of state medical commitment for a close friend. I will be happy and passionate about entertaining questions on this matter at any time after my return.

Sincerely,

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